

Message Text

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AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

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TAGS PGOV, GR

SUBJ: OPPOSITION PARTIES ABSTAIN FROM VOTING ON CONTROVERSIAL
ARTICLES OF DRAFT CONSTITUTION

1. ON MAY 12 THE PARLIAMENT BEGAN DEBATE ON FIVE CONTROVERSIAL ARTICLES OF THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION (ARTICLES 5, 10, 12, 22 AND 24) DEALING WITH INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS. THE OPPOSITION PARTIES HAD BEEN CRITICAL OF THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE IN THE DRAFT TEXT AS BEING TOO RESTRICTIVE AND HAD THREATENED TO BOYCOTT CONSIDERATION OF THESE ARTICLES UNLESS THEY WERE AMENDED. ON MONDAY, THE GOVERNMENT IN FACT DID TABLE AMENDED VERSIONS OF THE ARTICLES IN QUESTION. HOWEVER, ATTEMPTS BY THE OPPOSITION TO AMEND THE ARTICLES FURTHER WERE REJECTED BY THE MAJORITY.

2. AFTER THE PARLIAMENT HAD ADOPTED TWO (ARTICLES 5 AND 10) OF THE FIVE CONTROVERSIAL ARTICLES ON TUESDAY EVENING, THE OPPOSITION LEADERS (MAVROS, PAPANDROU AND ILIOU) ANNOUNCED THAT THE OPPOSITION PARTIES WOULD JOINTLY ABSTAIN FROM FURTHER DISCUSSION AND ON THE VOTE ON THE REMAINING THREE ARTICLES (ARTICLES 12, 22 AND 24), LEAVING FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR INCLUSION OF THESE ARTICLES IN THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT MAJORITY. MOREOVER, CU/NF LEADER MAVROS INDICATED THAT THIS ATTITUDE ALSO APPLIED TO THE TWO ARTICLES ALREADY ADOPTED AS WELL AS TWO OTHERS (THE LATTER-ARTICLES UNCLASSIFIED

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61 AND 84 - DEALING WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A

DEPUTY FOR SLANDEROUS MISREPRESENTATION, AND RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PARLIAMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT RESPECTIVELY). THE OPPOSITION DEPUTIES REMAINED ON THE FLOOR BUT DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN FURTHER DEBATE ON THE VOTING ON ARTICLES 12, 22 AND 24. HOWEVER, THE LARGE GOVERNMENT MAJORITY THEN PROCEEDED TO ADOPT THESE ARTICLES.

3. THE ARTICLES ON INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS IN QUESTION ARE CONCERNED WITH: (A) PERSONAL LIBERTIES (ARTICLE 5). (B) PUBLIC GATHERINGS (ARTICLE 10), (C) POLITICAL PARTIES (ARTICLES 12), (D) INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS (ARTICLE 22), AND (3) THE RIGHT TO STRIKE (ARTICLE 24).

4. WITH RESPECT TO ARTICLE 5, WHICH CONCERNS DEPORTATION, THE OPPOSITION ARGUED THAT THE PRACTICE OF DEPORTATION PER SE SHOULD BE ELIMINATED. THE GOVERNMENT ARGUED THAT WHILE IT SHOULD PERHAPS NOT BE UTILIZED ON AN ADMINISTRATIVE BASIS IT SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR USE THROUGH THE JUDICIAL PROCESS. REGARDING ARTICLE 10 ON PUBLIC GATHERINGS, THE GOVERNMENT AGREED TO LIMIT POLICE PRESENCE TO OUTDOOR GATHERINGS.

5. WITH RESPECT TO ARTICLE 22, OPPOSITION FELT THAT AS NOW DRAFTED, MORE CONTROL IS PLACED ON EXERCISE OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS THAN ON ORGANS OF THE STATE. (PAPANDROU ARGUED THE ARTICLE SHOULD BE DROPPED ENTIRELY). WITH RESPECT TO ARTICLE 24, OPPOSITION OBJECTED TO RESTRICTIONS ON RIGHT TO STRIKE BY PUBLIC EMPLOYEES.

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